1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
FF52 Nupe FF52

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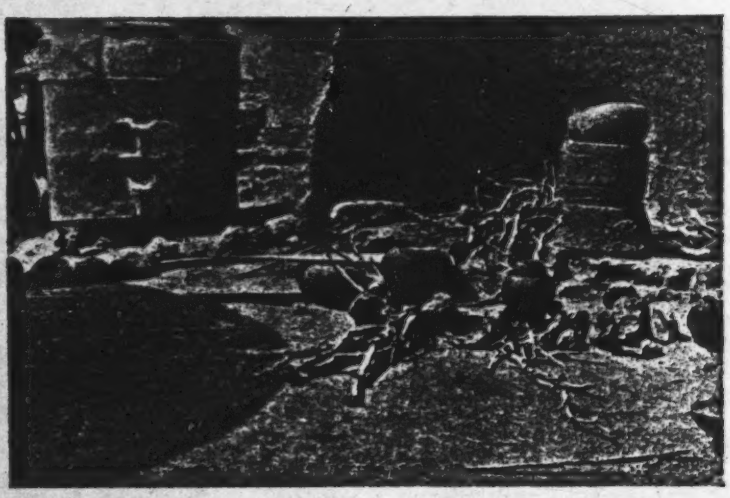
A FAMILY HEAD REPAIRING HIS GRANARY



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GRANARY AND COOKING PLACE IN A VILLAGE COMPOUND

[FACING p.226]

1: Nadel E-5 (1934-1936) 1942
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diameter, they are built of clay, with strong, thick walls. Over the dome-like top a grass roof is placed as protection from sun and rain. The granary is raised above the ground, resting on stones or solid blocks of clay, to make it safe from termites. On one side, a little above the middle, is a rectangular opening which can be closed completely with a clay lid. At the beginning of the rainy season you will see the people everywhere busy repairing their granaries, or building new ones, which are to take the new crop. Later, when they have been filled, the lid is closed, and the granaries then left until their contents are required for food or sale.

Millet and sorghum are stored unthreshed, in whole heads. They keep remarkably well in these granaries. The method of storing unthreshed grain ensures a certain measure of ventilation and also prevents the grain from being packed too tightly in the granary, and thus becoming damp and mouldy.[1] As already mentioned, late millet and sorghum are left to dry on the fields for a few days before being taken home to be stored. Bulrush-millet, which is reaped during the rains, may have to be dried in special roast ovens before it is fit for storing. These ovens, *yaku*, which are used for various purposes besides the drying of millet—soap-making and the drying of shea-nuts—are built of clay, of roughly cylindrical shape, about 5 feet high and 3 feet wide, and are divided into half horizontally by a sieve-like grill. The bottom part of the oven takes the fuel (firewood), the upper half, which is open at the top, is the receptacle for the stuff to be dried or roasted. Frequently a small grass roof is put up over the oven to provide shade for the women working there. Every Nupe village possesses a large number of these ovens. They are placed outside the compounds, often on the outskirts of the village. They are not the property of individual households, but are built by the men of the village or village section in collective work, and used by the women—the drying and roasting being their work.

The seed plants are as a rule at once divided up from the crop. The seed yams are stored on the farm—unless yam is planted immediately after the harvest. The heads of millet, sorghum, and maize which are later to supply the seeds are stored, not in the granaries, but in the hut of the family head, where they are kept on a shelf of bamboo or wood underneath the roof.

The crops undergo no further treatment during the time of storage. As mentioned already, the Nupe do not dry yam.[2] Sorghum and millet are not threshed until the grain is being prepared for cooking or sale, although heads of unthreshed grain, packed in large bundles, are also offered for sale on the markets. The threshing is done in the courtyard

[1] This is actually the almost universal method of grain storage in Northern Nigeria. An indirect testimony to its efficacy I chanced to obtain from Hausa settlers in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan whom I had occasion to visit in 1939. Chiefly for lack of proper building material for the construction of the Nigerian type of clay granary, these settlers have adopted the Sudan method of storage, i.e. storage of threshed grain. They all agreed that this method was inferior to the Nigerian, and preserved the grain much less satisfactorily.

[2] It is interesting to note that the Nupe colonies in Yoruba country and the Nupe communities which are living side by side with Yoruba communities in Ilorin Province have adopted the drying of yam.